

Appl. No. 09/847,795
Amtd. dated July 19, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 18, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please cancel claims 6 and 7 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1-5, and 8-16 as follows:

1. (currently amended) An combined electronic price label (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising:

an electronic sign (ES) for displaying a promotional message;

a plurality of EPLs;

a price lookup (PLU) file; and

a common host computer for reading an EPL/ES data file separate from the PLU file to determine if an identification number stored in the EPL/ES data file is a promotion identification number associated with the ES or an item identification number associated with an EPL, said host computer operating to send for sending a message to the ES which includes a command for the ES to display the promotional message if the identification number is associated with the ES, and operating to send a message to the EPL if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

2. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the host computer includes a promotional data file, and the host computer is for reading reads the promotional message from the promotional data file.

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3. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein further comprising a promotional data file that includes a plurality of promotional messages, and wherein the host computer is for using utilizes the identification number to provide an index to select one of the plurality of promotional messages from the promotional data file for transmission to the ES.

4. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the host computer is further for sending a message to the EPL which includes a command for the ES EPL to display a price if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

5. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ESL system of claim 1 wherein the identification number:

provides a message offset pointer indicating a location of the promotional message, if the identification number is associated with the ES, and

provides a price offset pointer indicating a location of a price displayed by the EPL, if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message is associated with an offer.

9. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 8 wherein the offer applies to a family of items which are not associated with a single PLU number.

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10. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes bundled price information associated with an offer.
11. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message when the ES is not displaying the promotional message.
12. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the message sent to the ES includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.
13. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message after the time period has expired.
14. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 13 wherein the ES displays the default message before the message is received.
15. (currently amended) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes a frequent buyer price.
16. (currently amended) A method of displaying a promotional message by an combined electronic price (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising the steps of:
 - (a) reading a record associated with an electronic price label (EPL) or the an ES from a combined EPL/ES data file separate from a price lookup (PLU) file;
 - (b) determining if the record is associated with the EPL or the ES;
 - (c) reading a promotional data file to determine the promotional message, if the record is associated with the ES;
 - (d) sending a promotional display message to the ES; and

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(e) displaying the promotional message by the ES.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein step (b) utilizes a flag which indicates if the record is associated with an EPL or an ES.

18. (original) The method of claim 16 further comprising, before step (a), the step of: displaying a default promotional message by the ES.

19. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the promotional display message includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.

20. (original) The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:

(f) displaying a default promotional message after the time period has elapsed.

21. (new) The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein if the identification number is associated with the EPL, then the common host computer looks up a price for the EPL in the PLU.